UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SIXTH SESSION

Official Records

FIRST COMMITTEE
Twelfth meeting
held on
Tuesday, 22 October 1991
at 3 p.m.
New York

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 12th MEETING

Chairman:	Mr. MROZIEWICZ	(Poland)
later:	Mr. ORDONEZ (Vice-Chairman)	(Philippines)

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91-61529 6742V (E)

Distr. GENERAL
A/C.1/46/PV.12
30 October 1991

ENGLISH

The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

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GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT ITEMS

Mr. VALENCIA (Ecuador) (interpretation from Spanish): Mr. Chairman, allow me at the outset to extend to you my delegation's congratulations on your election to preside over the Committee's deliberations, as well as our congratulations to the other officers. Ecuador is confident that your professional experience and outstanding abilities ensure a successful outcome of this session.

I should also like to express my delegation's gratitude to Mr. Yasushi Akashi, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, and his associates for the outstanding performance of the Department for Disarmament Affairs over the past year, details of which were contained in Mr. Akashi's report to us at the beginning of the general debate. My delegation will certainly take his observations into account.

On behalf of the delegation of Ecuador, I take this opportunity to express our sorrow at the death of that great citizen of Mexico, Don Alfonso Garcia Robles, a Latin American figure who made an outstanding contribution to the noble ideals of international peace and security.

The international legal order recognizes as a principle the right of States to individual and collective self-defence. None the less, as is the case with any insufficiently codified legal principle in an international law that is still imperfect and incomplete, its practical implementation has often been left to the subjective judgement of those invoking it - namely, States. It is these subjective judgements about the need for self-defence which are in some instances at variance with the good faith that should govern human relations, and which have been used to justify the accumulation of weapons and

(Mr. Valencia, Ecuador)

have subjected countries to great risks and dangerous burdens. In its most extreme form the principle of self-defence as embodied in the doctrine of nuclear deterrence has in past decades led to an unparalleled stockpiling of weapons of mass destruction.

Now, as all the delegations that have participated in this debate so far have noted, we are witnessing a new turn in international relations. The new era is characterized by a decrease in the number of areas of conflict of interest between the great Powers, which has made it possible to reconsider the doctrine of deterrence that has hitherto been viewed as the most effective form of self-defence.

(Mr. Valencia, Ecuador)

The new climate of understanding has clearly had an impact on the allies of the great Powers and their respective military blocs. In our opinion, the European case, as we may call it, is clear proof that only when conflicts of interest between States are overcome will it be possible to engage in a true disarmament process.

The disarmament process in Europe has consisted of a series of understandings, spread over time, with specific goals at each point of history. Initially they concentrated on the adoption of measures to prevent the uncontrolled outbreak of crises and to build a military balance of the two blocs. Those agreements, which led to the so-called confidence-building measures, later resulted in agreements on arms control, troop reductions and disarmament proper. The Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, signed in Paris in November last year, shows how long a road had to be travelled leading, happily, to that stage.

It should be emphasized that the European disarmament process was not carried out in multilateral forums, and disarmament processes in other regions may follow the same lines. The United Nations has never been able to suggest to the States of that region its views on disarmament. It is clear that in the European case the parties involved in conflicts of interest had to overcome them through direct dialogue. Other members of the international community were able to suggest ways to reach understandings, but had no way to persuade anyone to follow them.

In practice, international forums have been useful for the discussion of matters with repercussions or effects going beyond frontiers. The various agreements and negotiations on the non-proliferation or control of weapons of mass destruction show that that is true. It should be stressed that the same

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great Powers and their military blocs prevented the international community from becoming extensively involved in a broader range of disarmament subjects, preferring to negotiate all arms control agreements bilaterally. Last July the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty between the Soviet Union and the United States was signed, and later the two Powers announced praiseworthy unilateral arms-control and arms-reduction measures. We congratulate their Governments on these new steps and urge them to continue in a constructive spirit.

Those two major disarmament events, as well as other agreements on nuclear and conventional disarmament, were achieved outside the forums of the United Nations. Any means of achieving effective international peace and security is positive. However, we must work harder to make sure that the United Nations can truly be the forum and framework of choice for making progress in the strengthening of peace and security, one of the most important aspects of which is disarmament.

However, in the limited sphere open to international forums in disarmament matters it has proved possible to make significant progress, which Ecuador welcomes, both in nuclear non-proliferation and in the control of other weapons of mass destruction. My country supports the strengthening of the non-proliferation system worldwide and welcomes the adherence of Mozambique, Zambia, Tanzania and South Africa to the non-proliferation Treaty. We also hope that the announced accession of France and China will take place as soon as possible.

With regard to non-proliferation, the international community has this year seen how one country, Iraq, was able to elude international controls and commit breaches of the Treaty. In the light of this, we agree with other States on the need to revise the verification mechanisms of the Treaty and the

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International Atomic Energy Agency to improve their effectiveness and make them universal.

More than one lesson about non-proliferation has been learned from the Iraqi case. Two in particular come to mind: the need to improve the Agency's inspection systems and the urgent need to determine whether international suppliers, not caring about the consequences of their actions, or unaware of them, may be providing the means to violate provisions of the Treaty. We believe there is an urgent need to establish a register of transfers of technology, components and material that could be used to build nuclear weapons, in breach of the provisions of the non-proliferation Treaty.

With regard to weapons of mass destruction, Ecuador also regards as positive the progress made in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons of the Conference on Disarmament and the prospect of its concluding its work next year. We also welcome the auspicious beginning made by the Third Review Conference of the Parties to the Convention on biological weapons. We reiterate our conviction that it is necessary to ban the use of all types of weapons of mass destruction and to destroy existing arsenals. Ecuador therefore appreciates the regional efforts being made to strengthen international non-proliferation regimes and regimes to control and ban weapons of mass destruction.

In Latin America the Declaration of Iguazu, signed on 30 November last year by Argentina and Brazil, will unquestionably strengthen the effect of the Treaty of Tlatelolco. The Mendoza Accord, signed on 5 September this year by Argentina, Brazil and Chile, and since adhered to by Uruguay, is a most important step towards declaring Latin America a zone free of weapons of mass destruction. The signatories declared

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"Their full commitment not to develop, produce, acquire in any way, stockpile or retain, transfer directly or indirectly, or use chemical or biological weapons". (A/46/463, annex, para. 1)

Latin America's concern about this subject is also reflected in the convening by the Peruvian Government of a meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Rio Group, to be held next year in Lima. Among other things, it will seek to strengthen the Latin American commitment to renounce weapons of mass destruction and to respect present and future international agreements on the matter. Those efforts pursue the general objective of converting Latin America into a zone of peace, a concept that has acquired a new dimension in the current international circumstances and which was presented by the President of Ecuador, Rodrigo Borja, in his address to the General Assembly at the current session.

Weapons of mass destruction - nuclear, chemical and biological - and their proliferation must have the highest priority in disarmament, because of their destructive potential. But we must not lose sight of other weapons systems that can threaten international peace and lead to great human suffering.

There has been no period of peace in international relations since the Second World War. As many authors have noted, there have been more than 150 military confrontations in third-world countries since that war. Great loss of human life and the destruction of entire nations have occurred in conflicts in which conventional weapons were used. Many third-world countries are today trying to cope with grave economic and social problems largely resulting from major expenditures on arms. As a result, there is an urgent need to begin controlling conventional weapons, seeking a balance that will counter the

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subjective judgements involved in invoking the principle of self-defence, and, lastly, leading to significant reductions in arsenals.

It is not only the countries of the third world that can contribute to attaining those objectives; the developed countries also have responsibilities, ranging from eliminating the threat of interfering militarily in other States to eliminating the presence of military bases on foreign soil and seeking control of illegal transfers of arms produced on their territory or transfers in general to particularly sensitive areas.

Most third-world countries invoke the principle of security and self-defence to arm themselves. Here again conflicts of interest often lead to subjective interpretations of that principle and to a conventional arms race. Disarmament among those nations, as in the case of others, will probably take some time and will not be achieved until conflicts of interest are resolved. Governments must acknowledge with realism the existence of those conflicts and work to find definitive solutions by peaceful means, for the sake of regional and international peace.

However, we cannot wait indefinitely, because the problems resulting from the arms race are already clear. The United Nations has a major role to play. That is why Ecuador supports confidence-building measures that may be drawn up multilaterally.

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For example, the arms transfer register promoted in this body by a group of Latin American countries is a valuable measure based on the principles of universality and voluntary compliance. It seems clear to us that a register cannot be used merely to control the acquisition of conventional arms; it should also be used to control the export of such weapons. Furthermore, it should contain information on, inter alia, weapons of mass destruction and means of warfare existing on military bases on foreign soil. We cannot promote an arms transfer register without taking into account the fact that arsenals exist that are produced internally in large numbers by certain States, nor can the register be confined to certain types of weapons.

Finally, Ecuador believes that international law should evolve in the direction of spelling out more clearly the principle of the self-defence of States. This subject logically goes beyond the province of the First Committee and calls for broad discussion within the United Nations system, because it involves a redefinition of international security - a concept that includes the essential values of a world society based on the interests of the human being and his far-reaching aspirations.

Mr. ERDENECHULUUN (Mongolia): The Mongolian delegation joins others in extending to you, Sir, sincere congratulations on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. We also congratulate the other members of the Bureau.

Mongolia, like all other countries, mourns the death of Ambassador Garcia Robles of Mexico, who made an invaluable contribution to disarmament efforts world-wide.

The world is living through times of exciting change and tremendous challenge. The rapid disappearance of the East-West ideological divide has engendered remarkable prospects for a new world order, which, it is hoped,

(Mr. Erdenechuluun, Mongolia)

will be based on simple but universal human aspirations to live free from the threat of war, hunger, the danger of foreign domination and the perils of social and economic injustice. In other words, disarmament, development and democracy are, in our view, intractably linked and destined to go hand in hand. Recent developments in the world have once again amply reaffirmed the strength and validity of that notion, and we believe there are grounds to assert that they will eventually develop into an irreversible process. It is therefore with a great deal of enthusiasm that we see that the cold war no longer overshadows the perennial issue of arms limitation and disarmament, that new, promising vistas are opening up in the collective quest to make our world a safer place to live in. However, a note of caution sounded by the Secretary-General in his report on the work of the Organization, to the effect that the opportunities now presented to us are not likely to remain open indefinitely, should be taken with all the seriousness and attention it deserves.

Mongolia welcomes the courageous and precedent-setting steps taken recently by the United States and the Soviet Union in regard to nuclear weapons. In our view, the fact that these unilateral steps have come about even before the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty is ratified highlights, among other things, the level of trust and understanding reached between these two powerful nations. We hope that this first action-reaction initiative will set in motion a continuous process leading to the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons. We also hope that other nuclear-weapon States will follow suit. We cannot fail to stress here, however, that reduction and/or destruction in one or another area should not be counterbalanced in a qualitative or quantitative sense in other areas of military effort.

(Mr. Erdenechuluun, Mongolia)

It goes without saying that the disarmament perspective should properly be more widely regional and global. Here I have in mind particularly such issues as the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, and conventional weapons transfers, which were brought into particularly sharp focus for the international community by the Gulf crisis.

As to the non-proliferation issue, we are faced with the dangerous situation of the viability and relevance of the Treaty itself being called into question. My delegation hopes that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) will be resolute in devising ways and means to improve the existing machinery of safeguards, thus ensuring the strict implementation of the non-proliferation Treaty provisions. In this connection, Mongolia is heartened by the increasing number of countries that have recently become parties to the non-proliferation Treaty. Especially noteworthy are the decisions by China and France to adhere to the Treaty. These commendable developments will no doubt further enhance the prestige and effectiveness of the Treaty. My delegation shares the view that the preparatory work for the non-proliferation Treaty Review Conference to be held in 1995 should begin as early as possible in order to ensure its success.

Closely linked with the problem of strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime is the question of a nuclear-test ban. An important event in this respect was the Amendment Conference held in January this year. The Conference acknowledged the complex and complicated nature of certain aspects of a comprehensive test-ban treaty, especially those with regard to verification of compliance and possible sanctions against non-compliance, and agreed to mandate the President of the Conference to conduct consultations with a view to achieving progress on those issues and resuming the work of the

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Conference at an appropriate time. We believe that the situation is propitious for moving ahead along this road, and in this connection Mongolia highly commends the announced recent Soviet unilateral moratorium on nuclear-weapon tests. We hope that other nuclear Powers will follow that laudable example.

Turning to the question of the prohibition of chemical weapons, we are heartened by the fact that all seem to agree on the possibility of finalizing the convention as early as next year. There are a number of unresolved issues, including verification, cost-sharing and the composition of the executive council of the organization for the prohibition of chemical weapons. We hope that the momentum gained will be maintained and the outstanding issues resolved as soon as possible. Mongolia wishes to reiterate its intention to be one of the first to sign that convention.

The Third Review Conference of States Parties to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention clearly showed the heightened interest of the international community in strengthening this important instrument, which represented the first genuine measure of disarmament. Mongolia is in favour of establishing a verification mechanism, and therefore supported the decision of the Conference to establish an Ad Hoc Group of Governmental Experts to identify and examine potential verification measures from a scientific and technical standpoint. We welcome the declarations made by several States parties to withdraw their reservations to the Geneva Protocol of 1925. Mongolia made such a declaration some time ago.

Along with a halt to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, there is another question of utmost importance for the international community

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to tackle. This problem as it stands, also touching upon the sensitive issue of State sovereignty, is how to reconcile the need to control the international arms trade and the legitimate security interests of States. The excessive accumulation and transfer of conventional weapons poses a serious threat to regional peace and stability.

(Mr. Erdenechuluun, Mongolia)

Notwithstanding all the conceptual and practical difficulties that this problem may encounter, my delegation firmly supports the idea of introducing transparency in international arms transfers and promoting the concept of reasonable sufficiency in conventional weapons through the establishment of a United Nations register of conventional arms transfers. In this respect my delegation highly commends the comprehensive and thought-provoking report of the group of experts on the study of ways and means of promoting transparency in international transfers of conventional arms, contained in document A/46/301, which could serve as a good basis for further deliberations on this issue.

We are of the view that the transfer of conventional weapons should be monitored first and foremost in respect of regions most plagued with turmoil and conflict. No efforts, in our view, should be spared in order to facilitate regional arms control endeavours. Here we have a valuable experience of the European continent on the reduction of conventional forces and the ways and means to build trust and ensure transparency.

The emerging new era in international relations strengthens us in our belief that this last decade of the twentieth century will be marked by tangible agreements in the field of disarmament - and the world community should spare no efforts towards that end.

Mr. PETROVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): On behalf of the Soviet delegation, I should like, first of all to congratulate you, Sir, a representative of a friendly and neighbouring country, on your election to the high post of Chairman of the First Committee at such an extremely important juncture in the multilateral discussions taking place on disarmament.

(Mr. Petrovsky, USSR)

Our work is taking place at a truly crucial and one might even say history-making time. The past year has been marked by developments of an extraordinary nature in every respect. A kind of Rubicon has been crossed. The seeds of a totally new climate in global politics, sown as the cold war was drawing to a close, are giving long-awaited sprouts. In practical terms, the architecture of a new world order is taking shape on the basis of universal recognition of the absolute value of the ideals of democracy and human rights and on global cooperation and partnership as the universal standard in inter-State relations. Various States are developing an unprecedented degree of consensus in their views and approaches to the cardinal issues of our time. Moreover, they are not being formulated in isolation, but on a collective basis. In the turbulence of today we can already see the contours of a new world - the emergence of a "pax United Nations".

This fully applies to the issues of security and to its essential component, disarmament. The recent initiative of President Bush and the response to it from President Gorbachev are a most encouraging prelude to that epoch-making phase in the arms control process which humanity is about to enter upon. The Soviet and United States proposals constitute a major breakthrough towards a nuclear-free and secure world. An end has come to those decades when the infrastructure of fear and mistrust used to shape international affairs. An effective course has been charted towards making new political thinking universal - towards achieving a higher qualitative level of joint efforts and getting down to truly joint creative work to implement modern approaches to disarmament.

(Mr. Petrovsky, USSR)

Vast opportunities have opened up for revitalizing efforts to curtail the arms race, both in traditional, already well-explored areas and in new ones which so far have not been covered by the arms control process.

For practical purposes, the Soviet Union and the United States have adopted similar basic positions on a wide range of issues related to dismantling their military structures. This applies, first and foremost, to the pivotal issues of nuclear disarmament: withdrawing from operational status and eliminating ground- and sea-launched tactical nuclear weapons, further limitations and reductions of strategic arms arsenals and the strengthening of trust and verification concerning nuclear-related activities of States.

The first indications have emerged that the two countries are narrowing their differences concerning the need to include naval issues in the arms control agenda. They have expressed similar views on the prospects for further cuts in conventional armed forces.

Of course, it would be an exaggeration to claim that the United States and the Soviet programmes of action in the field of disarmament are completely identical. The statement by the Soviet President contains a number of proposals which, in our view, seek to follow up on the United States initiatives.

But the most important thing is that already here and now it is clear that today common ground already achieved reveals an emerging pattern of a new phase in disarmament which can usher in a fundamentally new strategy of international and national security, one that will meet the requirements of the incipient new world order and the "pax United Nations".

(Mr. Petrovsky, USSR)

The significance of the Soviet and United States initiatives is all the more apparent because they also dramatically alter the traditional model of arms control and disarmament which hitherto was based almost exclusively on a negotiating process designed to achieve balanced international agreements. To be sure, unilateral steps and sometimes quite major ones, were taken in the past, inter alia, by the Soviet Union. But these unilateral steps were mostly sporadic in nature and as a rule were not followed by commensurate measures in response.

Now this gap, which is so fundamentally important for the disarmament process, has been closed. In a link-up of their disarmament policies, the Soviet Union and the United States are developing a new methodology for addressing arms control issues which combines complementary negotiating efforts with unilateral actions and also steps undertaken by States to accommodate each other as an expression of goodwill and mutual example.

(Mr. Petrovsky, USSR)

Thus, the Soviet and United States initiatives are providing a unique opportunity to modify the actual pattern of the arms race in fundamental ways - indeed, to turn it into its own opposite: a disarmament race.

I should like to state here today that we stand ready to cooperate to these ends with all interested parties, both on a bilateral level with the United States and in conjunction with all members of the international community and, of course, with the other major nuclear Powers, particularly now that we believe that our initiatives seem to offer every opportunity for so doing.

Today, when the world community has entered upon a period of dramatic change, the need for strategic stability is particularly pressing. When we say "stability," we do not mean the preservation of the status quo but, rather, the creation of suitable and favorable conditions for the steady progress of positive change. Confrontation and cold war must not give way to chaos. The task is to replace the now-dismantled rigid structures of enforced stability by a flexible, seismic-resistant framework for stable cooperation and interaction.

Lasting nuclear security is the key to attaining this goal. That is why we intend to do more than merely follow a policy of reductions in our nuclear capabilities; we actually intend to strengthen the system that keeps them under control. I am empowered to state here today that the strategic nuclear forces of our country are going to remain a single structure under strictly centralized command and control, completely ruling out any possibility of their unauthorized use. Furthermore, so long as nuclear weapons continue to exist we are looking towards a strategy of nuclear deterrence to be implemented by the country's reorganized nuclear forces.

(Mr. Petrovsky, USSR)

The fundamental changes in national approaches to the goals of disarmament are inextricably linked with their profoundly changed relationships in the sphere of security. There is a growing trend towards replacing unilateral methods based on military force by structures that rely on cooperative security. In today's interdependent world the concept of indivisible security is taking on a new, practical connotation that expresses the unity and integrity of security's national and international dimensions. Their increasing organic interdependence is emerging as a natural trend that is transforming wide-ranging multilateral interaction into a key factor for the formulation and implementation of a qualitatively new strategy to ensure peace and stability.

All of this is opening up as never before prospects for the United Nations as the leading multilateral center of world policy coordination; it is opening up for the Organization unique and unprecedented prospects for carrying out the tasks entrusted to it by the world community. In the area of security, the Organization's work could be concentrated at the least on two major areas. The first is the need to lay down clear international legal ground rules for the use of military force. Given the continuing arms race, it is important to make collective efforts to change the very function of the military-power factor. The objective here is to minimize its destabilizing effect and to rule out the use of military force for any purposes other than the maintenance of international peace and security in strict, literal conformity and compliance with the provisions of the United Nations Charter.

All of the recent developments in the field of disarmament have vividly demonstrated the important role of confidence-building and openness in what used to be the most secretive of all spheres, namely, military affairs. We hope that in this area too a decisive breakthrough will be possible in the

(Mr. Petrovsky, USSR)

very near future, reaching agreement on a new area of disarmament, an open skies regime that will know no forbidden zones or closed areas whatsoever. I believe conditions are now ripe for making such a breakthrough.

The other, no-doubt-equally important area is the implementation of disarmament objectives and the need to make every effort to promote ongoing trends in their multilateral dimension.

In this connection we see a pressing need to begin work today on formulating the concept of multilateral disarmament and to set up a priority list of disarmament questions facing the international community.

We might already as of today consider drafting a new agenda for the United Nations, one that would reflect the present nature of the global military and strategic situation, and this would add weight to the idea of making disarmament a global process and fill it with material content.

Here, we see a high priority - and, in fact, a fundamental task and objective - in the search for coordinated ways to adapt United Nations disarmament machinery to the new realities of the disarmament process.

An even closer linkage between disarmament and security issues might be one concrete form of such adaptation. Addressing these issues from a single and consistent standpoint is a long-standing imperative that may help the mechanisms of disarmament realize their as-yet untapped potential.

Another way in which the United Nations disarmament mechanisms can adapt to new realities is by focusing on issues that are explicitly multilateral in character and that can be appropriately solved only in a multilateral and collective context.

As part of this approach to formulating the concept of multilateral disarmament, the concept of the defence-oriented transformation of national

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military doctrines acquires particular importance. Their relevance has greatly increased in the wake of the initiatives taken by the Presidents of the Soviet Union and the United States, which reflect a clear-cut tendency for both countries to put their national security policies on a defensive footing. Such transformations are also important because they can provide an indispensable material base for an international legal framework designed to control the military power factor and provide what may be called military and technical guarantees against potential acts of aggression.

(Mr. Petrovsky, USSR)

Our basic policy in that regard was spelled out in considerable detail in a letter by our Foreign Minister to the Secretary-General. We see a transition to defensive military doctrines as a vital element in maintaining strategic stability. The military posture of the new Union must therefore be united and rest on a coalition and a synthesis of the basic elements of the national security concepts of the States that will form the Union. Its underlying political principle should be the renunciation of war as a means of resolving international disputes and controversies.

Today's realities, however, make it premature to assume that the risk of war has been truly eliminated. In our view, combining phase-by-phase reductions in national armed forces and a transition to defensive postures with a parallel consolidation of military capabilities, under United Nations auspices, could be an important way of strengthening stability. This is a new and very promising area for our efforts to secure strategic stability.

We welcome the beginning of a multilateral dialogue on defence concepts in the United Nations. We feel that joint efforts can lead to coordinated approaches to defensive doctrines, and help work out the criteria and parameters of defensive sufficiency and define the optimal principles and variants for building defence. The United Nations study now being pursued by governmental experts will, we hope, make a tangible contribution to dealing with the entire range of practical issues involved.

Nuclear disarmament issues should, of course, remain the focus of keen international attention. Indeed, the Soviet and United States proposals are now creating a most favourable climate in that area. The Soviet Union is convinced that in the United Nations, too, there is a need for nuclear

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disarmament discussions to proceed on the basis of realistic approaches reflecting the new dynamic of nuclear arms cuts essentially aimed at achieving levels of minimal deterrence.

The new frontiers of interaction and understanding in the field of nuclear disarmament offer an opportunity for nuclear Powers to start substantive consultations and in-depth discussions of the meaning of minimal deterrence, its fundamental principles and its role as a stabilizing factor in the reduction of nuclear armaments.

It appears that the time has come for other nuclear Powers which have traditionally remained outside nuclear disarmament to enter the process. In this context, most serious consideration should be given to the proposal by President François Mitterrand of France that as soon as possible the four Powers possessing nuclear weapons in Europe should hold a meeting devoted to issues of nuclear security on the continent.

A nuclear-test ban is a priority area of multilateral nuclear disarmament efforts. As we approach a new phase of disarmament, extremely favourable conditions are developing for a breakthrough in that area. The unilateral Soviet moratorium on nuclear testing, the initiatives of several other countries, particularly that of Sweden, and the growing awareness of international public opinion of this issue have brought us considerably closer to the goal of achieving once and for all a comprehensive nuclear-test ban.

A greater contribution to that end might be expected from the United Nations, too. The Organization should be able to engage its vast intellectual resources in a comprehensive study of nuclear-test-ban issues, with particular emphasis on the availability and potential efficiency of alternative ways and

(Mr. Petrovsky, USSR)

procedures for verifying the reliability, safety and other technical parameters of nuclear weapons.

The Soviet Union calls for the issue of fissionable materials to be included in the negotiating process without further delay. We have made known our preparedness to agree with the United States on verifiable non-production of all fissionable materials for weapons purposes. Another idea which remains as relevant as ever is to establish a multilateral mechanism for monitoring the production of fissionable materials for weapons purposes, with a view to building confidence among the nuclear Powers. As a first step in that direction, an exchange of views on the subject could be started at this session.

The establishment of such a verification mechanism might greatly facilitate progress in the important area of preventing the military use of fissionable materials released as a result of nuclear-arms cuts. Now that a process of genuine disarmament has begun, this aspect is coming to the fore. Its relevance will only increase with the passage of time. Therefore, we must get down to negotiating specific agreements to that effect without further delay.

The non-proliferation issues are undoubtedly crucial in terms of strengthening global security and stability. Under the present circumstances, non-proliferation becomes a universal issue applicable to all types of weapons of mass destruction, their delivery systems and international supplies of conventional arms. In the context of the latest Soviet and United States nuclear disarmament initiatives, which offer an opportunity to reduce nuclear weapons to minimal deterrence, a new dimension is being added to the non-proliferation issues, which have become a crucial element of further far-reaching cuts in nuclear arsenals.

(Mr. Petrovsky, USSR)

We see the main task of nuclear non-proliferation efforts to be to globalize the work to strengthen the non-proliferation regime, to make the 1968 Treaty an instrument of unlimited duration and to have that status formalized at the 1995 Review Conference.

We welcome the positive trends that have emerged in this area lately. The recent agreement in principle to accede to the Treaty announced by France and the People's Republic of China, two nuclear Powers which for many years had formally remained outside the Treaty, adherence to the Treaty by several States in southern Africa and the Guadalajara agreements between Brazil and Argentina are all major practical steps which bring the world community closer to the goal of universality and further consolidation of existing non-proliferation structures. The General Assembly could appeal to all States that have not yet adhered to the 1968 Treaty to become parties to it before 1995 and could call for strengthening the Treaty compliance regime.

(Mr. Petrovsky, USSR)

There has long been a need to come to terms with the conclusion of effective international agreements designed to provide security assurances to States that do not possess nuclear weapons. We hope that our appeal for the nuclear Powers to come forward with a joint declaration on the non-first use of nuclear weapons will meet with a positive response in the United Nations and will be seen as a step towards resolving the entire range of issues related to negative assurances.

Preventing the spread of combat missiles and missile technology is a top priority task on the non-proliferation agenda. We must say frankly that the existing international mechanisms for this purpose, however useful they may be, fall short of dealing with the problem on a global scale. We favour solutions that would bar any proliferation of missiles or missile technology, while at the same time taking into account the need for international cooperation in the peaceful uses of advanced technologies. One promising idea would be to set up an international mechanism similar to the IAEA that would deal with missile and space exploration issues by providing safeguards against the proliferation of combat missiles and promoting cooperation among States in the peaceful uses of outer space.

The multidimensional nature of the non-proliferation problem makes it imperative for us to concentrate on its regional aspect, and specifically to intensify dialogue concerning the establishment of nuclear-free zones. In the aftermath of Soviet and United States initiatives, additional opportunities are emerging for a breakthrough in this area and for the actual establishment of such zones in various regions of the world. This could apply in particular to the Middle East, Northern Europe, the Korean peninsula, and other areas as well. Multilateral efforts here could be focused both on facilitating practical case-by-case solutions and on producing what could be described as a

(Mr. Petrovsky, USSR)

nuclear-free-zone integrated model defining the most nearly universal parameters applicable wherever such zones might be set up.

Solid barriers must be raised against the spread of bacteriological and chemical weapons. The outcome of the recent Review Conference of the Convention on the Prohibition and Elimination of Bacteriological Weapons, expressed in its far-reaching and carefully balanced decisions - primarily those on verification, openness and confidence building - has established clear guidelines for joint practical action to strengthen the ban on bacteriological weapons. With regard to chemical weapons, we welcome the marked progress in negotiating the provisions of a convention on the prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons, and believe that a realistic opportunity is now at hand to finalize the draft convention before the end of 1992. The General Assembly might well wish to call on the Conference on Disarmament to complete the drafting of the convention as soon as possible. This is also one of the highest priority issues on the multilateral agenda.

The growth of regional tensions and the outbursts of ethnic strife that have lately taken on particularly violent forms in various parts of the globe are an alarming sign of the risks inherent in the unrestrained arms trade. Hardly anyone today will question the fact that this major problem of global security and stability has outgrown the confines of any country's national agenda and can be dealt with solely at the level of purposeful multilateral actions. Obviously the lion's share of responsibility in this regard rests with the major arms exporters, which all permanent members of the Security Council are known to be.

It was therefore quite logical for the five to take the lead in starting a dialogue on the subject. It is to be hoped that the measures elaborated in the process will become an important contribution to the formulation of the

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main principles that will govern arms supplies and provide a basis for agreement on universally acceptable norms of international behaviour in this regard.

The recent meetings in Paris and London, of course, were just the beginning of the road. It is now essential to avoid complacency and to move persistently ahead. The present task is to implement the ideas set forth with a view to increasing transparency in the arms trade. Hence the need to carry the dialogue forward, expand its subject-matter and broaden participation in it by inviting the major arms exporters and recipients from various parts of the world to join in. In that connection, we consider it vital to make the arms-trade issue a fixed priority on the agenda of the United Nations and we would like to see the General Assembly adopt recommendations in favour of an across-the-board multilateral dialogue on limiting arms transfers, with special emphasis on regional aspects.

I wish to address specifically the proposal for setting up a United Nations register of arms sales and transfers. This topic appears at present to be as relevant as any in terms of both its political implications and the amount of practical work already accomplished in this regard. As a result of efforts by many nations, including the five permanent members of the Security Council, the members of the European Community, Japan, Sweden, Colombia and others, an impressive potential has been accumulated for the substantive work now being undertaken on this subject. The conclusions and recommendations spelled out in the relevant report by a group of governmental experts can be confidently described as useful.

All this lays a strong foundation for further progress. We reiterate the Soviet Union's readiness to participate vigorously in defining specific

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parameters for the register, which, in our view, should be established on a universal and non-discriminatory basis.

We view the register in the context of further potential efforts to conclude, under the auspices of the United Nations, a convention on the limitation of international sales and transfers of conventional armaments and the monitoring thereof. Given the exceptional importance of this instrument and the current favourable opportunities for implementing it, we feel that it would be desirable to have the register approved at the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

By virtue of their global scope, the Soviet and United States disarmament initiatives appear to have significantly broadened the horizons of regional disarmament, offering a realistic chance for accelerated progress in many of its key areas. Present-day perceptions of disarmament in its regional aspects underscore the requirement to proceed with due regard for the overall political environment in relations among States in any given region, primarily the leading Powers therein. The United Nations, in our view, could play an important role in finding an adequate balance of national interests, while giving priority attention to areas affected by strong regional rivalries that threaten to erode global stability.

Today's realities make it clear that regional disarmament measures must be organically incorporated into the evolving United Nations system of preventive diplomacy as a factor which, apart from strengthening stability, can also significantly reduce tensions in specific regions.

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Although regional disarmament has increasingly become a global task affecting the interests of the entire world community, it would appear that initiatives in this area should come first and foremost from States themselves at a regional level. And it is encouraging to see that recently States in various regions of the world have come forward with a number of serious initiatives which provide a clear indication of their willingness to work jointly on searching for optimal formulas for maintaining regional security and which, in and of themselves, promote the globalization of the disarmament process.

We also see a historical imperative in the fact that issues such as the impact of science and technology on international security, conversion of military industries and the economic and social implications of disarmament are becoming an integral part of the emerging multilateral disarmament agenda. Their increasing role strongly suggests that disarmament today is not perceived by the world community in purely military and technical terms, but is also seen as a much more complex concept comprising military and political elements along with a wide range of social and economic factors which affect the vital development interests of each and every nation.

This is also what makes adequate solutions especially difficult to find. Every effort to that end should, on the one hand, be clearly geared to strengthening global security and, on the other, should not create obstacles to national development and international economic, scientific and technological cooperation.

It is with these two aspects in mind that we should approach what has traditionally been a sensitive issue for many countries - that is, the

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supply of multi-purpose modern technology. Any arrangements in this respect must ultimately be based on such a degree of understanding between suppliers and recipients as would make it possible to draw a clear boundary between military applications and civilian uses.

In our efforts to limit the use of scientific and technological advances for military purposes we must bear in mind that the rapid development of modern industries and highly sophisticated technologies not only poses a potential threat of a new qualitative arms race, but also contains a vast positive potential for upgrading the logistics of the disarmament process. And today this is a very serious practical task. In particular, excellent possibilities are emerging for improving the performance of existing verification methods and procedures and for enhancing their reliability and effectiveness.

This may also facilitate the solution of many problems related to conversion of military production in particular and concerning the development of environmentally clean methods for destroying military hardware with a view to minimalizing possible adverse effects on the environment and on human health. In the long term, the United Nations could, in our view, contribute to the development of large-scale environmental projects which would make extensive use of converted technologies and know-how as well as labour and economic resources released as a result of conversion. Quite a few interesting ideas and proposals to that effect can be found in the Report of the Secretary-General on the ways and means for converting defence industries to environmentally clean production.

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As to our general approaches to the issues of conversion, these were recently set forth in a letter from the Foreign Minister of the USSR to the Secretary-General. We would favour taking advantage of the events sponsored by the World Disarmament Campaign and other United Nations programmes which have been so successfully carried out under the talented leadership of Mr. Akashi as well as by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, in order to find ways to establish practical cooperation in coordinating the exchange of information and national experience in the field of conversion.

The wide range of multilateral disarmament challenges will, of course, require that disarmament machinery run smoothly and effectively. Today their rationalization is becoming a political imperative applying to all structures which have any relation to disarmament. They must encompass all structures which to any degree deal with the disarmament problem. We believe that it is high time now to reconsider seriously the long-established view of rationalization as a matter of secondary, subordinate importance which is relegated to the background; behind more significant so-called substantive issues of disarmament. Today, it is apparent to everyone that, in regard to the question of rationalization and enhancement of the effectiveness of the functioning of disarmament machinery, the United Nations is acquiring high-priority significance since it is the solutions to these questions which will to a great extent determine the future of the Organization itself as a multilateral forum capable of constructively complementing disarmament efforts at the bilateral and unilateral levels.

We are living at a remarkable time, which has been rightly described by the Organization's outstanding leader, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, as a great

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turning-point in history. History is being made literally before our eyes and each year brings with it a rapid succession of new events which keep changing the face of the planet and adding ever-new aspects and shades to the picture and character of today's world development. What only yesterday used to stir the minds of politicians, scholars and diplomats, what firmly held public attention world-wide, is today often easily overshadowed by new challenges and risks which are being brought to us in abundance by our turbulent and kaleidoscopic times.

Now that East-West military and political confrontation has become a thing of the past, the international agenda today is topped by very complex and pressing problems of transnational dimensions which are already diverting huge material and intellectual resources and which cannot be dealt with unilaterally even by the world's biggest and most powerful nations.

But it is becoming increasingly clear that these problems, which are a key not only to the well-being of individual countries or regions, but also, in the final analysis, to the future of our entire civilization, can hardly be solved so long as State-to-State relations remain militarized to such a great extent and so long as States continue to preserve their massive nuclear overkill capabilities. If things are to change, the arms control process must be intensified; it must be globalized in order to cover all spheres of military activity. Disarmament today is more than just one other effective way to strengthen security: it is also the primary source of energy and vast resources for the world community which should be released and redirected to serve the noble objectives of social and economic development.

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"Time," wrote the outstanding twentieth-century philosopher Martin Heidegger, "inevitably makes people do what they would prefer to put off for ever." Today, the world has a truly unique opportunity to rid itself of its huge burden of armaments, and we must not let that opportunity slip away. A peaceful and secure life for succeeding generations is within our reach and can be made a reality through painstaking and persistent efforts by all the States Members of the United Nations to ensure stable development. We are now facing the challenge of time, and it is our profound belief that the United Nations will meet it.

Mr. KOEFFLER (Austria): Following the vast panoramic view of the future of disarmament and arms control just afforded us by First Deputy Minister Vladimir Petrovsky, my delegation must necessarily speak with less ambition.

Today, we should like to make a few comments on the agenda item concerning conventional disarmament. During the past two weeks, the highest-ranking military representatives of the States members of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) assembled to exchange views on the military doctrines of their countries. That meeting, the second of its kind, was a demonstration of the European trend towards more defence-oriented force structures and doctrines and towards smaller, although more mobile and flexible, conventional forces.

I mention this not only because both of those meetings were held in Vienna but also because they prove that the bipolar political and security order in Europe is about to enter the annals of history.

The first part of my statement will therefore be concerned with European security structures, and in the second part I will touch upon conventional disarmament *per se*.

(Mr. Koeffler, Austria)

The emerging new security structure in Europe will have various focal points and institutions with diverse membership. Military alliances, economic, political and security communities, regional and bilateral agreements, as well as neutrality and non-alignment, will all have to be integrated into a differentiated security environment.

The CSCE serves as the comprehensive framework for such an environment. The threat of surprise attacks and of large-scale offensive action seems to be ended, and these days we are witnessing new dangers of local and regional armed conflict for which traditional arms control agreements were not designed. Future security risks will increasingly develop out of regional crises. Internal tensions within States are bound to aggravate relations between States. This type of conflict must be seen in the wider context of economic, social, environmental and ethnic disparities within relatively small areas. The ability of any State to handle these interdependent growth and security problems individually is declining; the need for cooperative efforts and structures is increasing.*

The basis of those structures was laid down in the Charter for a New Europe a year ago in Paris. CSCE member States undertake therein to respect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. They have underlined the indivisibility of European security. They have assumed the responsibility to address security matters collectively and, to this end, to render the political dialogue more effective.

Dialogue and assistance, in practical terms, will eventually help to construct a fully united Europe. The deep economic and social crises in the

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* Mr. Ordonez (Philippines), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

(Mr. Koeffler, Austria)

Central and East European countries, their transition to a market economy, the necessity of a new security status and re-awakened nationalism might well be the most urgent problems of the new Europe, problems with which other regions of the world are equally confronted.

To enhance security, the three CSCE institutions - the Secretariat, the Office for Free Elections and the Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC) - will have to be fully used and further developed in the light of the experiences gained.

Here, I might say a few words with regard to the Conflict Prevention Centre which has been set up in Vienna. That Centre has to assist the Council of Ministers to reduce the risk of conflicts. In order for it to fulfil that task, its specific functions will have to cover military as well as non-military aspects of security. Above all, the Centre should be enabled to react quickly in crisis situations.

Its Consultative Committee should develop into a forum for a continuing and regular dialogue on all security-related issues. In addition to the provisions regarding unusual military activities, the Consultative Committee should also convene on an ad hoc basis in situations of a non-military nature that have a bearing on security. Specific instruments - such as fact-finding procedures or liaison missions - should enable the Conflict Prevention Centre to contribute to risk reduction and conflict prevention.

I have spoken about this recent experience in Europe, not out of Eurocentricity - at least, I hope not; I have done so because the genesis of conflict seems to have comparable roots everywhere, and its prevention requires similar ways and means.

(Mr. Koeffler, Austria)

This comparability or similarity was brought into the open at the Seminar on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures held by the Department for Disarmament Affairs in February of this year at Vienna.

Now, let me touch upon the question of conventional disarmament as such.

(Mr. Koeffler, Austria)

Last year in this Committee I stated the obvious - that conventional disarmament formed an integral part of the disarmament process. General and complete disarmament has always included its conventional side on an equal footing with nuclear weapons. Prospects for nuclear disarmament are greatly enhanced if the threats posed by conventional forces are reduced. We can today see that this interrelationship is leading to practical results. They should produce a peace dividend for those countries which are most in need.

In conclusion, it can be said that at present conventional disarmament is taking place in terms of equipment and personnel. In the future arms control and disarmament will have to be embodied within a broader concept of security. The drawing up of rules for handling military power may become more important than preoccupation with the size and equipment of armed forces. The total dimension of military activities will have to be taken into consideration to make cooperative security an indivisible instrument of peace.

Mr. HAYES (Ireland): First, I wish to congratulate the Chairman on his election. I suppose I should really be congratulating representatives on their selection of a Chairman whose experience, wisdom and personal qualities are an assurance that our work will be guided by a steady hand.

I also wish to congratulate the other officers of the Committee on their election and to assure all our officers of the complete and wholehearted cooperation of my delegation.

The Ambassador of the Netherlands spoke earlier on behalf of the European Community and its member States, including Ireland, and I should like to associate myself with his remarks.

We can indeed approach our work in this Committee in a more optimistic frame of mind this year than we have been able to do for some time. The

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radical transformation of relations between States which we have witnessed in recent years has led to a new sense of unity and common purpose in the United Nations. We are closer now to a realization of the spirit and ambition which inspired the founders of the United Nations than ever before in the history of the Organization. This is reflected not only in the increased authority and stature of the United Nations, but in the actions of many Member States. Today we can look with satisfaction on a number of measures which constitute significant progress towards disarmament and, equally importantly, provide a sound basis for further advances in that direction.

Chief among these measures must be the recent announcements by the Presidents of the United States and the Soviet Union of reductions in their nuclear forces and of other measures and proposals aimed at reducing the threat posed by these weapons. If we owe a special debt of gratitude to President Bush for initiating this process, we owe an equal debt to President Gorbachev, who not only matched the United States proposals but exceeded them in significant ways. We particularly welcome the Soviet proposal of a 50 per cent reduction in strategic nuclear forces, and we hope that the United States will respond positively to this offer. Coming as they do so soon after the conclusion of the Strategic Arms Reduction (START) Treaty, which we also warmly welcome, these recent initiatives offer the prospect not only of substantial reductions in nuclear weapons, but also of a qualitatively new approach to their development and use by the nuclear Powers.

From a military point of view, we cannot overlook the fact that both the United States and the Soviet Union will continue to possess enormous nuclear arsenals far in excess of any conceivable national security requirements. Neither of them has renounced the right or the intention to develop new systems in the future. Moreover, while both of them have made proposals

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which, if agreed and implemented, would constitute significant further progress, this will depend on the outcome of further discussions and negotiations between them.

These qualifications, however, do not detract from our positive overall evaluation of the United States and Soviet initiatives. The announcements by the United States and Soviet leaders reflect a new recognition of the enormity of the threat which nuclear weapons pose, a threat which affects all nations, both nuclear and non-nuclear. If there is as yet no sign that the nuclear Powers are ready to renounce these weapons completely, there is at least encouraging evidence of a new determination on their part to make safer the control over them.

In this perspective, we support the moves by the United States and the Soviet Union to remove a great many of their nuclear weapons from active service and to improve their command and control procedures to ensure the safest possible handling of these weapons. We would urge the other nuclear Powers to follow suit and to take appropriate measures to reassure the international community that their nuclear arsenals are secure from accidental or deliberate interference. Needless to say, the disposal and storage of any nuclear weapons or delivery systems must be carried out in a manner which does not pose any risk to the security or safety of any country. This is a matter which is of great interest and concern to all nations, including my own.

Two other points arising out of the United States and Soviet initiatives deserve special mention. First, as a result of the withdrawal of all tactical nuclear weapons other than air-launched missiles, we can now contemplate for the first time ever not only the elimination of all short-range missiles but, even more ambitiously, the complete elimination of all sub-strategic nuclear

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weapons. There are, of course, many further steps that would be required before we could reach this stage, which might be regarded as an intermediate goal on the way to the ultimate objective of the complete elimination of all nuclear weapons. In particular, it would require the cooperation of all the nuclear Powers. Nevertheless, the benefits of such a move would be considerable. The risk of accidental damage from mobile short-range systems and the risk of a conventional war escalating into a nuclear one would be considerably reduced.

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Even by the logic of those who favour the nuclear option, the elimination of all sub-strategic nuclear weapons should not be an unacceptable step in the light of the changes in the international security situation which have taken place in recent years. We therefore call on all the nuclear Powers to cease the development of all sub-strategic nuclear weapons and to enter into negotiations to ban the testing of those weapons for all time.

The second aspect of the United States and Soviet initiatives which deserves special mention is the announcement by President Gorbachev of a unilateral one-year moratorium on nuclear testing and his call on the other nuclear Powers to follow that path towards the earliest possible and complete cessation of nuclear testing. We warmly welcome this announcement and hope that it will be matched by the other nuclear Powers in the same spirit of courage and imagination in which it was offered. For our part, we remain convinced that only a comprehensive ban on the testing of all nuclear weapons will succeed in bringing us to our ultimate goal: the complete elimination of all nuclear weapons, which is a necessary condition for general and complete disarmament. We continue to attach the highest priority to the early conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. We earnestly hope that the Soviet initiative will help to improve the prospects for early progress in this area.

In that context, I would like to add a special word of welcome for the arms control and disarmament plan announced by the President of France on 3 June 1991. In addition to a number of important proposals covering other areas of arms control and disarmament, President Mitterrand announced the France's decision in principle to adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We warmly welcome that decision

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as we do the subsequent announcement by China of its intention also to adhere to the non-proliferation Treaty.

My country, which has a long association with the NPT, believes that that Treaty constitutes the principal foundation on which our future efforts in the field of nuclear disarmament should be based. The adherence of France and China will mean that all five permanent members of the Security Council and all the declared nuclear Powers will have joined the NPT. We hope that those two countries will take the necessary steps to formalize their adherence to the Treaty at the earliest possible date and that their actions will serve as an example to other States which have not yet done so. As the NPT becomes more universal, we believe that its effectiveness will be strengthened and that the dangers of nuclear proliferation, which regrettably must still be of great concern to us all, will be reduced and ultimately eliminated.

While the recent initiatives by the nuclear Powers deserve our principal attention by virtue of both their content and their topicality, there have been developments in other areas of the disarmament field since this Committee last met which are also worthy of acknowledgement.

The Permanent Representative of the Netherlands has already referred to the very positive developments in the field of chemical weapons, which have done so much to improve the prospects for reaching agreement on a convention on the complete prohibition of such weapons in the course of the next year. The importance of concluding such a convention cannot be overstated. We warmly welcome the initiative of President Bush concerning the destruction of United States stocks of chemical weapons, which has greatly facilitated progress on the negotiation of the convention in the Conference on Disarmament; we look forward with confidence to the outcome of this work in the next year.

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We welcome also the results of the recent Review Conference of the biological weapons Convention. We believe that the additional confidence-building measures agreed and the establishment of an ad hoc group on verification are significant advances which will help to strengthen the Convention. At the same time, I am bound to say that we would have preferred it if more substantive measures could have been agreed in order to improve the effectiveness of the Convention. However, we are aware of the technical complexities involved and we recognize that further consideration will be required to produce agreement on measures which will command consensus among all the parties to the Convention. We call on all parties to the Convention to join actively in this process, and we urge those States which have not yet acceded to the Convention to do so as soon as possible.

In the field of conventional-arms control, we welcome the progress which has been made in a number of areas. Although nuclear disarmament continues to be the highest priority for Ireland, we believe that conventional disarmament is also of the greatest importance and deserves our closest attention.

We welcome in particular the resolution of the problems which were holding up the implementation of the Treaty on conventional forces in Europe. We look forward to the early ratification and entry into force of that Treaty. We are monitoring closely the follow-on negotiations in Vienna and we hope that they will reach a satisfactory conclusion by the time of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) follow-up meeting in Helsinki next year. We are also following the Open Skies Conference with interest and attention. We hope that the CSCE negotiations on confidence- and security-building measures will also produce substantial results for the Helsinki follow-up meeting.

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We recognize that arms reductions pose particular problems for certain countries. Those countries which, for historical reasons, have a heavy reliance on military industries will have major difficulties converting them to purely civil activities. This question will have to be approached with understanding and imagination. In the long term, however, we believe that the ultimate rewards of conversion will outweigh the immediate hardships involved.

The security situation in Europe is changing rapidly. As the confrontation and suspicion of the past give way to the cooperation and solidarity of today, new ways of assuring security are required. We believe that the CSCE offers a very suitable framework for developing a new cooperative approach to security, covering the whole of Europe. That new approach must involve, not just the traditional elements of arms reduction and confidence-building, but an innovative array of cooperative security measures which strengthen the political instruments available to the States participating in the CSCE to prevent conflicts and settle disputes through exclusively peaceful means. The new CSCE structures and institutions are still at an early stage of development and require further refinement and improvement. Nevertheless, they have already demonstrated their worth and they offer a model which could be of value to other countries and to other regions of the world.

Regrettably, not all of the developments in this field in the last year have been positive ones. The flagrant disregard by Iraq of the principles of the United Nations Charter and of the wishes of the international community as expressed in the resolutions of the Security Council led to a tragic and unnecessary war. We deeply regret the loss of life which occurred during that conflict and the hardship that people continue to suffer as a result of it.

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The outcome of the Gulf War holds many lessons for us all. First, it has reaffirmed the determination of the international community to refuse to bow to aggression. While this new-found cohesiveness will help to avoid similar conflicts of this nature in the future, it has been achieved at a terrible cost, which could so easily have been avoided if Iraq had chosen the path of dialogue and negotiation instead of extremism and isolation.

Secondly, the Gulf war has demonstrated the dangers which excessive build-ups of arms pose both for regional stability and for world peace. There is, I believe, a new awareness of the need to address the issue of overarmament and it is in this context that Ireland strongly supports the draft resolution on the establishment of a United Nations register of conventional arms transfers that will be introduced in this Committee during the current session. This measure will not in itself prevent any State from acquiring conventional weapons. However, by introducing an element of transparency into this area, it will, we hope, encourage States to be more aware of the need for restraint in their arms procurement and to provide for their legitimate security needs in a responsible and moderate manner.

Thirdly, and most disturbing, the Gulf War has led to the uncovering of secret nuclear, chemical and biological weapons programmes in Iraq. There can no longer be any doubt of this in the light of the evidence gathered by the United Nations inspection teams. We deplore in the strongest possible terms the fact that Iraq has engaged in these programmes in breach of its commitments under the international agreements to which it is a party. The revelation that Iraq, although an adherent to the non-proliferation Treaty, was actively pursuing the development of a nuclear-weapons programme is a matter of deep concern to all, including my country, who have worked to make

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the non-proliferation Treaty the benchmark by which the commitment of States to use nuclear energy for exclusively peaceful purposes can be judged.

It is clear that the safeguards system of IAEA needs to be strengthened. Together with its European Community partners, Ireland made proposals to this effect at the recent General Conference of IAEA, and it hopes that they will lead to early agreement on this issue. In the meantime, we call on Iraq fully to respect and comply with the resolutions of the Security Council and to cease its obstruction of the efforts of the United Nations teams charged with carrying out the mandate given to them by the international community.

At the beginning of my statement, I referred to the new sense of purpose in the United Nations. My Government believes that the world stands today on the threshold of a new era in the field of nuclear disarmament. While it may be premature to conclude that the nuclear arms race is definitively over, there are good grounds nevertheless for believing that the unnecessarily prolific accumulation of nuclear weapons may be a thing of the past. As a result of the recent initiatives of the nuclear Powers, we now have a historic opportunity to accelerate the process of nuclear disarmament and to make concrete and substantial progress towards the ultimate objective of general and complete disarmament. It is our common responsibility in the United Nations to seize the opportunities now offered and to play our part in harnessing this new mood of optimism by bringing it to bear on the great global challenges we face in the field of disarmament.

There will of course be many difficulties ahead. Translating political will into concrete actions will not be easy. In all our discussions on

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disarmament measures, we should focus our attention on practicable steps that are realistic and attainable. At the same time, we should not lack ambition but rather apply ourselves with renewed urgency and vigour to the task at hand. For its part, Ireland will continue to use its best endeavours to these ends.

The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.